

Requirements for Importers and Distributors of Earthworms from Europe or Countries Other Than Canada

1. Currently, only *Eisenia* (= *Dendrobaena*) *veneta* is permissible for release into the environment as fish bait. However, the USDA is in the process of conducting a risk analysis to determine if other earthworm species may be acceptable. At this time, the permittee is to ensure that the imported worms are correctly identified as *Eisenia* (= *Dendrobaena*) *veneta*. Plant Protection and Quarantine officers may inspect shipments at any time to confirm the identification and gut contents of the worms.
2. Importation of earthworms in soil is prohibited. Earthworms must be reared on a diet free of plant pathogens. The diet may contain paper pulp, sawdust, and Pasteurized vegetables (vegetables that have been held at a temperature of 180°F. for 30 minutes. At no time during the rearing or packaging process are earthworms to be fed soil, uncooked vegetables or partially cooked vegetables.
3. At all times during the rearing operation, worms are to kept separated from the ground by a heavy layer of plastic, fiberglass, metal or other material that is not biodegradable.
4. No substrate materials other than the allowed pulp, sawdust, and Pasteurized vegetables are to be included in shipments.
5. Permit applications must be submitted for all U.S. States in which the permittee plans to ship the worms.
6. Receipt of a USDA permit does not relieve the applicant of the obligation to comply with regulations of other State and Federal agencies (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).